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Message Text

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63
ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 COME-00 INT-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01

SCI-06 SCEM-02 CIEP-02 STR-08 FAA-00 IO-14 AID-20

DRC-01 /177 W
---------- 079617
R 221208Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5883
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1668

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRN TD
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: ALLOCATIONS OF FUEL TO INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS

REF: STATE 248152; POS 1663; POS A-123, DEC 21, 1973

SUMMARY: AGAINST BACKGROUND OF PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH ON ENERGY CRISIS EVENING OF DECEMBER 20 (POS REFS), AMBASSADOR IN FAREWELL CALL INFORMED GOTT MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE MAHABIR OF ALLOCATIONS DESCRIBED STATE REFTEL. MAHABIR WAS VERY PLEASED AT THE NEWS, AND ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT GOTT WILL PROVIDE US CARRIERS RECIPROCAL TREATMENT, UNLESS ARABS INSIST THAT TRINIDAD NOT DO SO ON PAIN OF FURTHER CRUDE REDUCTIONS. MAHABIR LATER REPORTED HE HAS PASSED NEWS TO PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS, WHO STILL WANTS USG SOMEHOW TO GUARANTEE AMPLE FUEL SUPPLIES FOR BWIA IN NEW YORK. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT TO COMMENT ON TWO QUESTIONS FROM WILLIAMS. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN HIS DEC 20 SPEECH ON THE ENERGY CRISIS, PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS

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WARNED THAT TRINIDAD CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO ALLOW ITS OWN OIL RESERVES TO SUBSIDIZE NON-CARIBBEAN AIRLINES, AND STATED THAT THE GOTT IS INVESTIGATING WHETHER AIRLINES HAVE BEEN TAKING ON "EXCESSIVE" FUEL AT PIARCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. WILLIAMS NOTED THAT TOURISM IN THE CARIBBEAN WILL BE STRONGLY AFFECTED BY OIL SHORTAGES, AND PLEDGED THAT THE GOTT-OWNED BWIA WILL MAINTAIN THE FLOW OF TOURISTS TO THE REGION. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED A CABINET DECISION THAT REGULATION OF FUEL SUPPLIES AT PIARCO WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAHABIR.

2. AMBASSADOR INFORMED MAHABIR OF ESSENCE OF STATE 248152 MORNING OF DEC 21. MAHABIR WAS VERY PLEASED AND SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY PASS IT ON TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND PETROLEUM MINISTER PREVATT. MAHABIR ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT GOTT WILL FUEL US CARRIERS ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS, UNLESS THE ARABS INSIST THAT THE GOTT STOP FUELING US AIRLINES AS A QUID PRO QUO FOR RESUMPTION OF CRUDE SUPPLIES TO TRINIDAD FROM ARAB SOURCES.

3. AT MID-DAY, MAHABIR REPORTED THAT HE HAD PSSED NEWS TO PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS. HE SAID WILLIAMS HAD ASKED TWO QUESTIONS: IS AIR JAMAICA CONSIDERED AN INTERNATIONAL CARRIER BY THE USG? WHY CAN'T THE STATE DEPT GUARANTEE THAT BWIA WILL RECEIVE ALL THE FUEL IT NEEDS, SINCE THIS QUANTITY OF FUEL IS LESS IN ABSOLUTE TERMS THAT THE QUANTITY OF FUEL NORMALLY RECEIVED BY US CARRIERS AT PIARCO? DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS REQUESTED.

4. ACCORDING TO LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS SERVING PIARCO, THEY HAVE BEEN ASSURED OF RECEIVING NORMAL FUEL REQUIREMENTS DURING DECEMBER, BUT HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED WORD ABOUT JANUARY ALLOCATIONS. PANAM'S MANAGER FEARS THAT HE MIGHT RECEIVE LESS THAN NECESSARY, ESPECIALLY IF THE GOTT STRICTLY APPLIES RECIPROCITY AND REDUCES HIS ALLOCATION TO 85 PERCENT OF 1972 BASE, AS USG APPARENTLY MIGHT DO TO BWIA. ALL THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES DENY THAT THEY HAVE ABUSED FUEL AVAILABILITY AT PIARCO BY PURCHASING MORE THAN USUAL, BUT NOTE THAT SCHEDULES AND FREQUENCIES ARE HEAVIER THIS YEAR. THEY CLAIM THAT SOME NON-SKEDS MAY HAVE LANDED AT PIARCO MERELY TO REFUEL FOR OTHER FLIGHTS.

5. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPORTED
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REMARKS THAT HE IS VERY CONCERNED WITH FUEL AVAILABILITY FOR BWIA, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF HIS PLEDGE THAT BSIA WOULD HELP MEET "TOURISM CRISIS" IN THE CARIBBENA. WE KNOW THAT BWIA ALREADY APPROACHED TEXACO FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT IN NEW YORK (POS 1641), AND YESTERDAY THE GOTT REQUESTED (SUCCESSFULLY) THAT SHELL INTERCEDE WITH ITS CANADIAN AFFILIATE TO PROVIDE FUEL IN GANDER FOR A CHARTER FLIGHT BRINGING TRINIDADIANS HOME FROM LONDON. HIS COMMENT ABOUT AIR JAMAICA INDICATES THAT

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THIS MUST HAVE BEEN SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AT THE RECENT ENERGY MEETING WITH MANLEY (THE GOTT ITSELF DOES NOT RECOGNIZE AIR JAMAICA AAS AN INTERNATIONAL CARRIER). THE PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT SEVERAL CHARTER FLIGHTS SERVING JAMAICA HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, AND BWIA MAY FIND ITSELF PUSHED INTO ATTEMPTING TO FILL THIS GAP. THIS SITUATION IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE SERIOUS EARLY NEXT YEAR AS THE CARIBBENA TOURIST SEASON CONTINUES AT A HIGH PITCH, ESPECIALLY AS THE FEB 25-26 CARNIVAL APPROACHES IN TRINIDAD.
MARSHALL

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